

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 13, 16-20, 22-28, and 30-31 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 5, 17, and 24 are the only independent claims.

Claims 17-26 have been withdrawn from consideration following an election/restriction requirement. Consideration of claims 17-20 and 22-26 is again respectfully requested. It is noted that claims 17 and 24 now recite that a surface of an optical material is bonded to and covered with a protective film having an outer surface roughness Ra of from 0.03 to 1 μ m, as also recited in present claims 1 and 5.

In the Office Action dated August 26, 2004, claims 1-3, 9-12, and 27-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over WO 00/44841 to Nagahama et al. ("Nagahama") in view of US 5,972,473 to Arakawa ("Arakawa"), claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Nagahama in view of Arakawa, further in view of US 6,111,699 to Iwata et al. ("Iwata"), claims 5-7, 13-16, and 29-31 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Nagahama in view of Arakawa, and claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Nagahama in view of Arakawa, and further in view of Iwata.

In addition to the Remarks set forth in the Amendment filed on October 21, 2004, it is submitted that Arakawa teaches that the Ra of its protection film is preferably $\frac{1}{2}$ or less of the film thickness, or more preferably 1/4 to 1/10 of the film thickness, which is 50 microns or less, and preferably 20 to 40 microns. In addition, Arakawa is completely silent as to any purposes or problems leading to the selection of a Ra of 1 micron or less for a protection film. As a result, a person of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated by Arakawa to select a Ra of 2 microns or more.

Further, it is submitted that it is conventional knowledge that Ra of 2 microns or more would lead to transmitted light being scattered or reflected. Consequently, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to apply a protection film as in Arakawa to the optical field. Specifically, it is conventional knowledge in the optical field that transparency is required of a protection film, so that the customary visual inspection of optical member (polarizing plates, etc.) may be carried out with the protection film laminated on the optical member. This visual inspection is not customary in the field of paper products (diapers, etc.) as disclosed in Arakawa. Thus, a person of ordinary skill in the art would reject the protection film of Arakawa as inappropriate for an optical field purpose because of the expected light scattering and reflections, which would be strongly expected to cause interference in the case of a visual inspection of an optical member.

In summary, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine the references as alleged in the Office Action, because that person would have found no motivation to transfer the teaching of Arakawa to an optical member and an optical material. Further, even if, arguendo, a person of ordinary skill in the art had attempted such adaptation, that person would have followed the teachings of Arakawa and used a Ra of 2 microns or above. Thus, the cited references taken alone or in any combination fail to teach or suggest the features of the presently claimed invention, and in particular a surface of an optical material bonded to and covered with a protective film having an outer surface roughness Ra of from 0.03 to 1 μ m, as recited in present claims 1, 5, 17, and 24.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, the invention as presently claimed is patentable. It is believed that the claims are in allowable condition and a notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

In the event there is, in the Examiner's opinion, any outstanding issue and such issue may be resolved by means of a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of the response period. Please charge the fee for such extension and any other fees which may be required to our Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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